

Muhammad Saleem Kamdar. *Development of Capitalism in Agriculture: An Essay on the Nature of Transformation (Change) of the 19th Century Agrarian Structure of Sindh Province in Pakistan.* Stuart, Florida. 1996. 146pp. Paperback. price not given.

This study examines the nature of ‘transformation’ or ‘change’ in the agrarian structure of the then western part of India (now Sindh province of Pakistan). It employs a Marxist-Structuralist framework in contrast to earlier, mainly historical, studies. The author indicates that development or change is a long-term process which involves relations between producers and others (landed aristocracy, agricultural traders, and the state) involved in the agricultural structure. And he considers ‘change’ or ‘development’ as a consequence of interactions between the ‘forces of production’ (inputs, technology, and natural resources) and the ‘relations of production’ (control of the forces of production). The major objective of the author’s analysis is to determine whether or not British control of Sindh for more than a century resulted in a major implementation of capitalism in agriculture.

Dr Kamdar’s treatment of the subject of ‘capitalism in agriculture’ in Sindh is divided into two major parts. The first deals with the pre-colonial period where attention is focused on the Kalhora and Talpur periods (circa 1736 to 1843), with only passing references to the Mughal period and its administration. The second part covers the British administration of Sindh from 1843 to 1947, the latter being the year of the partition of India and the British departure from the Subcontinent.

The monograph is a comprehensive treatment of the subject by an author who has detailed familiarity with the history and agricultural structure of Sindh. Clearly, the British made huge strides in bringing irrigation and transportation facilities to Sindh. These greatly expanded the commercial markets for agricultural products. However, the major finding of the study is that the British failed, in the main, to constitute production along capitalistic lines. This finding appears well-documented and valid. The reasons for this failure included the following developments. (a) The “mutiny” of 1857 acted as a constraint on the British. In order to avoid a revolt by the peasants (haris), the British chose to maintain a *status quo* in their relationship with the landed aristocracy who controlled the peasantry. (b) The Hindu minority who provided merchant capital to the Muslim peasantry in agriculture were afraid to enter the countryside to recover operating loans without the support of the largely Muslim landed aristocracy. This constrained the emergence of a class of pure wage-earners essential to capitalism. (c) Agriculture, with its characteristics of personal and paternalistic relations (in contrast to the impersonal and market relationships present in manufacturing) resisted the penetration of capitalism.

The book also offers much to the reader with a more general interest than that of development in Sindh province. The first half of the book is largely devoted to a general discussion of alternative analytical frameworks not often emphasised in neo-

classical educational programmes. Dr Kamdar's analysis of the unique difficulties that agriculture presents for the development of capitalism also appears to have a more general application. For example, debates in the United States and elsewhere concerning the future of large confinement livestock farming might well benefit from some of the material in Kamdar's monograph.

Although the monograph includes some repetition, and is in places difficult to read, it tells a vivid story of the continuation of exploitation of the peasantry in Sindh during the period of British rule. It chronicles well the continuation of a mainly feudal agricultural structure even though the British avowed a policy to bring capitalism to agriculture. And it offers an interesting alternative to neo-classical analysis for the more general reader. A substantial bibliography is provided for those who wish to pursue their own personal analysis of the subject.

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